

Social Context, Attitudes and Opportunities for Learning English : A Study of Motivation among Women Junior College Students in Japan

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This study examines context as it pertains to the attitudes of women junior college students majoring in English and the affects these attitudes have on motivation. Some of the attitudes which were found to be present among the subjects are peculiar to Japanese college students and it is hoped that this study will be of particular use to non-Japanese teachers confronting them for the first time.

Motivation for FLL is commonly examined for integrative and instrumental factors in attempts to ascertain which is the more supportive of success in foreign language learning. Observations of Japanese society in general and women college students in particular make it clear, however, that among certain groups of learners there can be other factors to motivation which may be more significant than these two traditionally described forms of motivation as reasons why students go to college and study English. To investigate this theory a wide-ranging questionnaire was administered to 59 female junior college students with the aim of finding out more about past and present contacts with native speakers of English, envisaged future uses of English, amount of English study done and reasons for entering junior college and selecting English as a major. The results of the questionnaire, reinforced by short interviews with a small number of students, support the view that traditionally described integrativeness and instrumentality are strong motivating factors among only some of the subjects. The characteristics of motivating factors found among the subjects of this study are described in some detail with reference to relevant aspects of the society in which they live to show the role of attitude. Profiles of well-motivated and not so well-motivated students are given and some suggestions made as to how the most frequently indicated motivating factors might be taken advantage of in the classroom.

1 . Introduction

In Japan more than 30% of high school leavers continue on to junior college or university and there was, as of April 1990, a total of 1,106 universities and junior colleges accommodating between them a little over 2.5 million students. Of this total, 596 of the tertiary institutions were two year junior colleges and they accounted for 444,000 of the total number of students. According to a guidebook to junior colleges published for the benefit of 1991 prospective students, more than 170 of these junior colleges have departments of English or English literature (*Zenkoku Tankidaigaku Juken Annai '91*). This figure becomes more significant when it is known that most of the colleges have no more than four departments altogether and only a handful teach any languages other than English.

In Shizuoka Prefecture, where the subjects of this study attend college, there is a total of ten junior colleges accommodating some 9,000 students. (The population of the prefecture is 3.5 million.) Of the ten, only three do not offer an English course. Annual intake into these English courses is around 700 students out of a total intake of some 2,800. The 10 junior colleges in the prefecture offer between them the following subjects: Japanese literature, English language and literature, food technology, international studies, information management, nursing, childhood education, music and art. English seems to be considered important in the curricula of junior colleges.

Another significant feature of junior colleges is that the student population is overwhelmingly female. Of the 596 junior colleges throughout Japan, only 259 are coeducational, the remaining 337 being for women only. In Shizuoka Prefecture only just over 1,300 of the total 9,000 junior college students are men.

These statistics would seem to indicate that in Japan there is a disproportionately large number of young women who have elected to go on to junior college after graduating from highschool and have chosen to major in English there. To understand the function of junior colleges and this resultant skew in enrollment figures it is necessary to look at certain aspects of Japanese society and the education system.

Robert C. Christopher, in his book *The Japanese Mind* in a chapter entitled the "Education Race", tells us that "every Japanese youngster knows that the status he achieves in life will be heavily-often, in fact, almost entirely determined by what university he gets into" (p. 83). He continues, however, by saying :

A Japanese girl who goes to a "good" university certainly improves her career prospects, but relatively few girls see the need for such effort : fewer than 25 percent of the students attending four-year universities in Japan are women. Proportionately, the number of male and female high school graduates who go on to college is roughly the same - about a third in each case - but the great majority of the women content themselves with two-year junior colleges, where they often specialize in "women's subjects" such as home economics that are calculated to enhance their marriageability (p. 84).

The object of this investigation is to show how certain attitudes, like those outlined by Christopher, which are a product of the society in which the foreign language learning is taking place, can have such a major affect on motivation that traditionally described factors such as instrumentality and integrativeness might, in some cases, be of only secondary importance as reasons for studying English.

Clément and Kruidener (1983) examined this aspect in their study of ethnicity, milieu and target language on the emergence of what they term orientations. They conclude :

...it seems that while some orientations might be common to a wide array of populations and situations, major variations are found to result from the interaction of cultural factors defining the learning situation... Previous studies of the relative importance of orientations seem to have assumed, a priori, the universality of and exhaustiveness of integrative and instrumental orientations... These results, however, suggest that the emergence of orientations is, to a large extent, determined by "who learns what in what milieu." (p. 288)

They then emphasize the importance of "considering the reliability of specific orientation constructs for the target population" in future studies designed to examine the power of orientations (p. 288).

Chihara and Oller (1978) obtained what were, by their own admission, puzzling results in a study designed to assess, among other things, the attitudes of Japanese students toward learning English, in that there were unpredicted negative and positive correlations between attitudes and attained levels of proficiency. They report, for instance, that the reasons for possibly traveling to an English speaking country judged most important by their subjects were integrative ones such as "to get to know many different kinds of people", "to learn English" and "to have new experiences" (p. 58). These attitudes would generally be judged supportive of FLL, yet Chihara and Oller found that the relationships between them and attained proficiency were weak. They themselves suggested that it might be necessary to question the validity of the attitude measures they used in order to account for these results, and the present study supports this suggestion. This writer would argue that the attitude measures which Chihara and Oller used do not account satisfactorily for all the possible reasons for learning a foreign language to be found among Japanese learners, and that the study does not take into account the great variety of people to be found in a group described only as "Japanese adults enrolled... at the Osaka YMCA in Japan" (p. 57). It is conceivable that those who readily admitted that "to get to know people" and "to learn English" were good reasons to travel to an English speaking country were desirous of doing just that, but uncertain about whether they would, in fact, ever travel, which was borne out by their not applying themselves seriously to thier studies. This is an attitude which was shown to be affecting motivation among junior college students as well. On the other hand, some reasons for learning English which proved significant in the present study, such as to understand foreign movies, songs and books, which might well have proved significant,

were not included in Chihara and Oller's study. The measures Chihara and Oller used to assess attitude and motivation were modelled after previous questionnaires by Gardner, Lambert, Spolsky and others well-known for their research into the relative significance of integrative and instrumental motivation in FLA. This may have resulted in a questionnaire designed to look only for these factors and which failed to take into account peculiarities of the specific language learning environment.

This writer's own observations of Japanese society in general and junior college students in particular, indicate that there are significant numbers of young women studying English at junior colleges in Japan whose reasons for attending college and majoring in English are neither clearly instrumental nor integrative. Instead, they might be described as 'social' in nature, that is, imposed by the nature of Japanese society.

The present study was carried out in an effort to determine whether there was a representative pattern of motivating factors among female junior college students and examine how these factors are reflected in the way the students apply themselves to their studies of English.

Procedure

A questionnaire was used to investigate relevant aspects of the learning environment of the subjects, their attitudes to junior college in general and English in particular, envisaged future uses of English and the degree to which they are applying themselves to their studies. The questionnaire was in Japanese and was filled out in class time. Fifteen of the subjects were also interviewed to obtain more detailed comments on the attitudes of individual students. TV and movie viewing habits were investigated briefly by means of a short survey administered after the main questionnaire.

Subjects

The subjects of this study were 59 junior college students majoring in English at Shizuoka Gakuen Junior College in Fujieda City in Shizuoka Prefecture in Japan. The subjects were all women and were the students in two classes called English Conversation. There were a total of 124 first-year students in the English Department, three of whom were men. Apart from English, the college also offers a course called Management Information. There were 135 first-year students in this department, thirteen of whom were men. The subjects were all aged 17 or 18 and had come to the college immediately after graduating from high school. Only two of the subjects were not resident in Shizuoka Prefecture and all but fourteen were living at home while attending college.

Competition for places at the college was reasonably high the year the subjects entered since they are the offspring of the post-war baby boom, and also because the college, which is newly established, fills a need for a college within commuting distance for students resident in the area. Two students competed, by way of an entrance exam and an interview, for each available place. Tuition fees at Japanese colleges in general are high in compar-

ison with other countries.

If the difficulties of gaining a place at the college and the rather high costs involved are considered, it would be easy to imagine that the subjects would be serious about learning English, but actual classroom contact proves that this is not always the case. The questionnaire and discussion which accompanies the results attempt to show why this might be so.

2 . Results and Discussion

Data gleaned from the questionnaire and from interviews with students will be discussed under six headings : contacts with English speakers, reasons for going to college and studying English, future uses of English, and application to the task of learning English. The questions will not necessarily be discussed in the same order as they appear in the questionnaire where they were arranged according to question type rather than topic. To simplify matters, the results of questions in which the subjects were required to choose from 1-5 to indicate the strength of their feelings have been combined into three groupings - [1] is expressed as *not at all*, [2-3] as *somewhat* or *sometimes*, and [4-5] as *very* or *often*.

Contacts with English speakers

Overseas travel experience (Questions 1, 2, 3)

Out of the 59 students who filled in the questionnaire 15% or 9 students had travelled overseas as tourists, 4 to non-English speaking locations near Japan such as Taiwan, Guam and South Korea, and 1 to Canada. The remaining 4 had been to America, Canada or Australia on what are called 'homestays'.

Only 3% of the students knew no one, family member or friend, who had been overseas. Of the 118 trips that were reported 50% were short tours or honeymoon trips, 23% were homestays or short school or sister city exchange visits, 12% were for study for at least one year and 10% were for business purposes. One surprising thing about these results is that only one student knew anyone (a brother) whose purpose for going overseas was, to use the subject's own words, 'ordinary travel', comprising two trips of one month in India and one year in Australia. There were no indications of friends or relatives marrying and settling overseas or residing overseas long-term for any other reason.

Even this very small sampling brings out quite clearly two noteworthy features. The majority of the trips were no more than brief tours which would have offered few opportunities for real contact with another culture. More than 80% of Japanese overseas travellers go for no more than short holiday tours and the lack of contact with locals is exacerbated by problems arising at their destinations, particularly South East Asian ones, on account of a tendency to move about in seemingly threatening groups and shop voraciously regardless of how it might appear to local residents (*Jiten 1990 Nendai Nihon no Kadai* p. 410). There are increasing numbers of hotels and shopping centers being built at popular locations to cater to the tastes of Japanese tourists in as Japanese way as

possible.

The second noteworthy feature is the phenomenon of the 'homestay'. A homestay offers young Japanese students of English the opportunity to spend a few weeks, a few months or as much as a year overseas in a family home as a way to increase language skills and experience the life style of another culture. The most popular destination for homestays is America and some high schools and an increasing number of junior colleges and universities (including the one the subjects attend) have their own homestay programs which are offered partly as an enticement to attract students. The results of the questionnaire indicate that homestay programs have provided important opportunities for the subjects and their friends and family to increase contacts with an English speaking culture. In reality, however, to experience a homestay is one of the prime objectives for learning English for many and may provide the first and last chance to use English in any substantive way.

Native English speakers as near neighbours (Question 4)

Only 19% of the subjects indicated that there were or had been English speaking foreigners living in the area of their family home. Only 3% of these residents were long-term, the remainder having been resident for a year or less. The fact that these subjects are resident in a rural area which does not attract many foreigners affects opportunities for contacts, but the learning environment is in general decidedly monocultural and monolingual.

Opportunities to speak with foreigners (Question 5)

Thirty-six percent of the subjects have never spoken to a foreigner in either English or Japanese, apart from teachers at school or junior college. The remaining 64% reported contacts of the following kinds: with English conversation teachers, with exchange or university students, with tourists, or with members of goodwill missions. The vast majority of foreigners in Japan for these purposes are transients and clearly not a part of everyday Japanese society. Most are doing what they are doing in Japan specifically because they are not Japanese. The rather limited opportunities for contact with native English speakers at home, along with the fact that possibilities for future overseas travel are restricted for most, is of very real significance for learners of English as a foreign language in this country.

Reasons for going to college and studying English

Reasons for going to college (Question 11)

Eighty-three percent cited "to improve their English", 72% "to obtain a creditable academic record" and 64% "to become a better educated person" as very important reasons for going to college. For 58% the possibilities college affords for enjoying oneself for two years between school and work were very important, and somewhat important for a further 35%. Interviews revealed other reasons for going to college not directly associated with a desire to gain proficiency in English, such as to fulfill the dreams of parents who

had been unable to get a higher education, and as a qualification to get a "good" husband.
Reasons for choosing this college (Question 6)

The reason which emerged most clearly for choosing this particular college over any other was that it was possible to commute from home. For 58% this was a very important reason and for a further 29% it was a somewhat important reason. The next most important reason was that this college was appropriate for the student's ability. For 34% this was very important and for a further 60% it was somewhat important. This result was confirmed by the number of students who indicated clearly under 'other' that this was the only college whose entrance exam they had succeeded in passing.

Good employment opportunities for graduates of this particular college was a relatively unimportant reason for choosing it; 11% said it was fairly important, 7% somewhat important and 20% not at all important. In reality, however, the reputation of junior colleges seems to depend very much on the extent to which they can place their graduates in "good" companies. At the college the subjects attend, there are two staff members whose job is to make contact with prospective employers and, where necessary, instruct students on how to answer job offer notices and present themselves at interviews. Advertisements for some colleges emphasize that "almost 100%" of their graduates found employment and list the most prestigious companies to have employed them.

As far as employment opportunities go, they are good for students of any college on account of a severe shortage of labour in Japan. Companies looking to employ new graduates send staff-wanted notices to the college's employment office for display, and for students graduating in April, 1991 the office had already received two job offers for every prospective graduate by September, 1990. Second-year students begin visiting companies they are interested in even before these notices are posted, often during class time, and around 80% have accepted a job offer by October. The taking up of these job offers is contingent upon graduating, but at the college the subjects attend, and many others like it, only those students who are consistently absent from class fail to graduate.

Reasons for choosing English rather than Information Management (Question 9)

The most significant reasons for choosing English rather than Information Management as a course of study were as follows: for 88% the fact that English is more interesting was very important, while 40% said that the fact that they had wanted to study English from way back was very important. In this context it should be noted that the 'staff wanted' notices mentioned above rarely indicate that applicants need to have a specific major. Of the 117 students who graduated from the English Department in April 1990, all but 8 immediately began work, but only one obtained a position where she might occasionally be able to use English, in a large hotel in the prefectural capital. In general, companies specifically requiring ability in English would look for a graduate of a four-year university rather than a junior college.

For 53% the fact that English would be more useful in their private lives was a very important reason for preferring it and for a further 41% it was a somewhat important

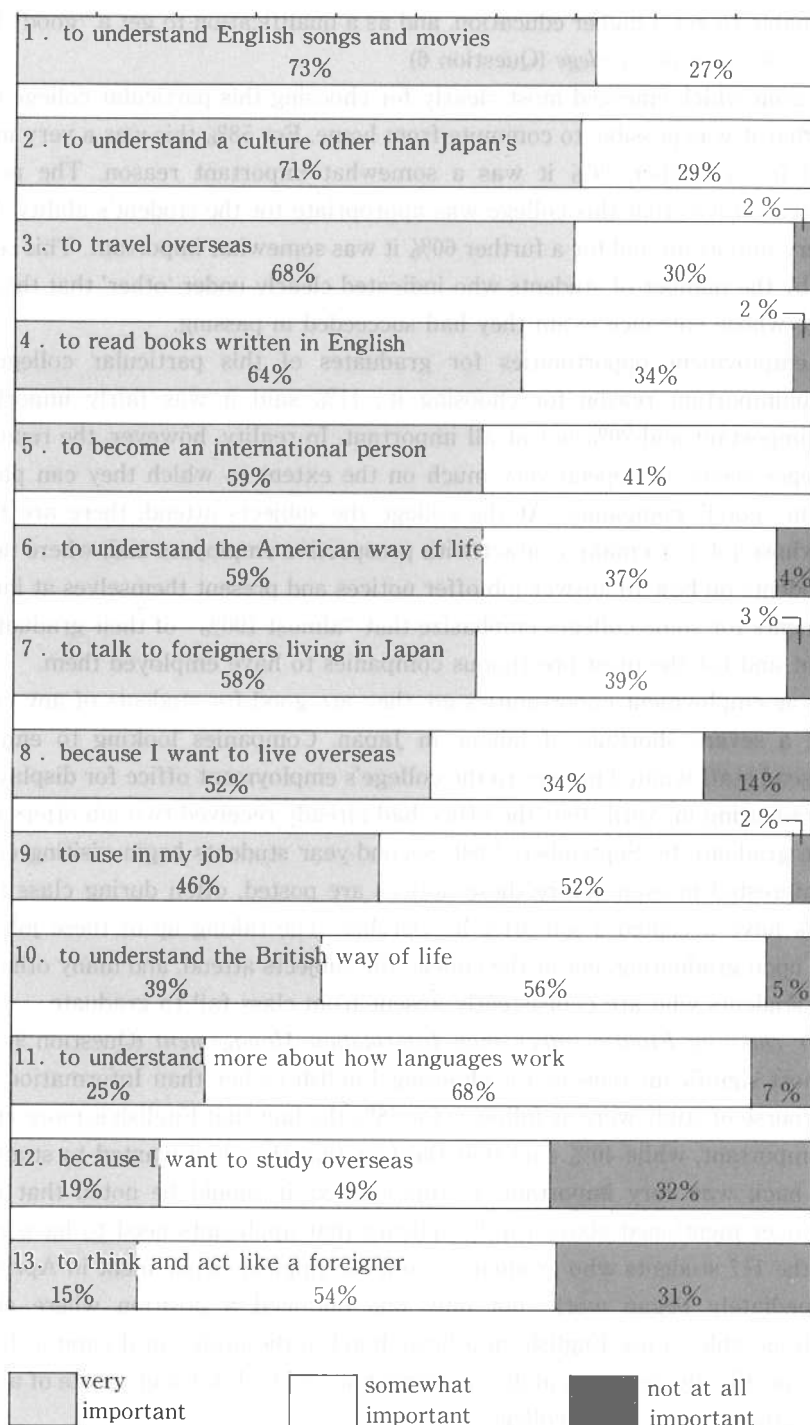


Figure 1. The Relative Importance of Possible Reasons for Wanting to Study English (Question 22)

reason.

Reasons for studying English (Question 22)

Reasons given for studying English are presented in Figure 1. Reasons for wanting to study English indicated here as being very important were also all related to ways English could be used in the private lives of the subjects, that is, to understand English songs and movies (73%), to understand a culture other than Japan's (71%) and to travel overseas (68%). Wanting to live overseas, wanting to study overseas, and wanting to think and act like a foreigner were not considered at all important as reasons for studying English by significant numbers. Surprisingly, 46% indicated they wanted to study English to use in their job even though the likelihood of being able to do so is slight.

Feelings about English (Question 21)

Seventy-three percent felt very strongly that English was important for their own future as well as Japan's, while 64% felt very strongly that it was interesting and 61% enjoyable. Fifty-three percent also felt very strongly that it was difficult.

Future Uses of English

Further study of English (Question 10)

The most likely ways in which the subjects thought they might continue to study English in the future was from TV or radio - 49% thought this was very likely. A further 34% thought it very likely they would go to an English conversation school. A surprisingly large 27% thought it very likely they would learn more English while living overseas. Twenty-two percent thought it very likely they would attend company lessons, while 17% thought it very likely they would take private lessons.

Future Overseas Travel (Question 12)

The most likely reason for future overseas travel was "for a honeymoon trip" - 78% thought this very likely. This was followed closely by "as a tourist" (75%). A further 54% thought it very likely they would go overseas on "a graduation trip". High numbers of students thought it not at all likely they would reside long term overseas (49%), visit family or friends (37%) or go overseas as a student (34%). Only 14% thought it very likely they would go overseas as a student, even though, in the question about envisaged future study of English, 27% indicated they thought they might study English further "while living overseas". There is some ambivalence evident here. An appropriate follow-up to this questionnaire would be a survey of the same subjects five years after graduation to find out if they were still actively studying English or had had an opportunity to use English in Japan or overseas.

Future Uses of English for Work Purposes (Questions 7, 8, 13)

Only 2% felt it not at all important for them to find a job using English, while 34% thought it somewhat important and 64% thought it very important. On the other hand, 22% thought it not at all easy for graduates from this college to find jobs using English in this area and a further 72% felt it to be somewhat difficult. Only 5% felt it to be very easy.

The positions using English in which the largest numbers of students indicated an interest were in a hotel, in a travel agency, in a foreign trading company, in a foreign owned company, as a tour conductor, as a translator or interpreter or as a teacher of Japanese to foreigners. In reality, of the students who graduated in 1990, only five found positions in hotels and one in a travel agency although not necessarily as English speakers. These positions are all ones more likely to be filled by graduates of four-year universities, or even overseas universities, if English ability is a requirement.

Application to the Task of Learning English

Part-time work (Questions 14, 15)

Sixty-nine percent had part-time jobs at the time the questionnaire was administered, working for 3 to 30 hours a week with the average time being about 14 hours. The 31% who were not then working all planned to get part-time jobs sometime while at college. There is no shortage of such jobs.

Number of hours spent on homework (Questions 18, 19, 20)

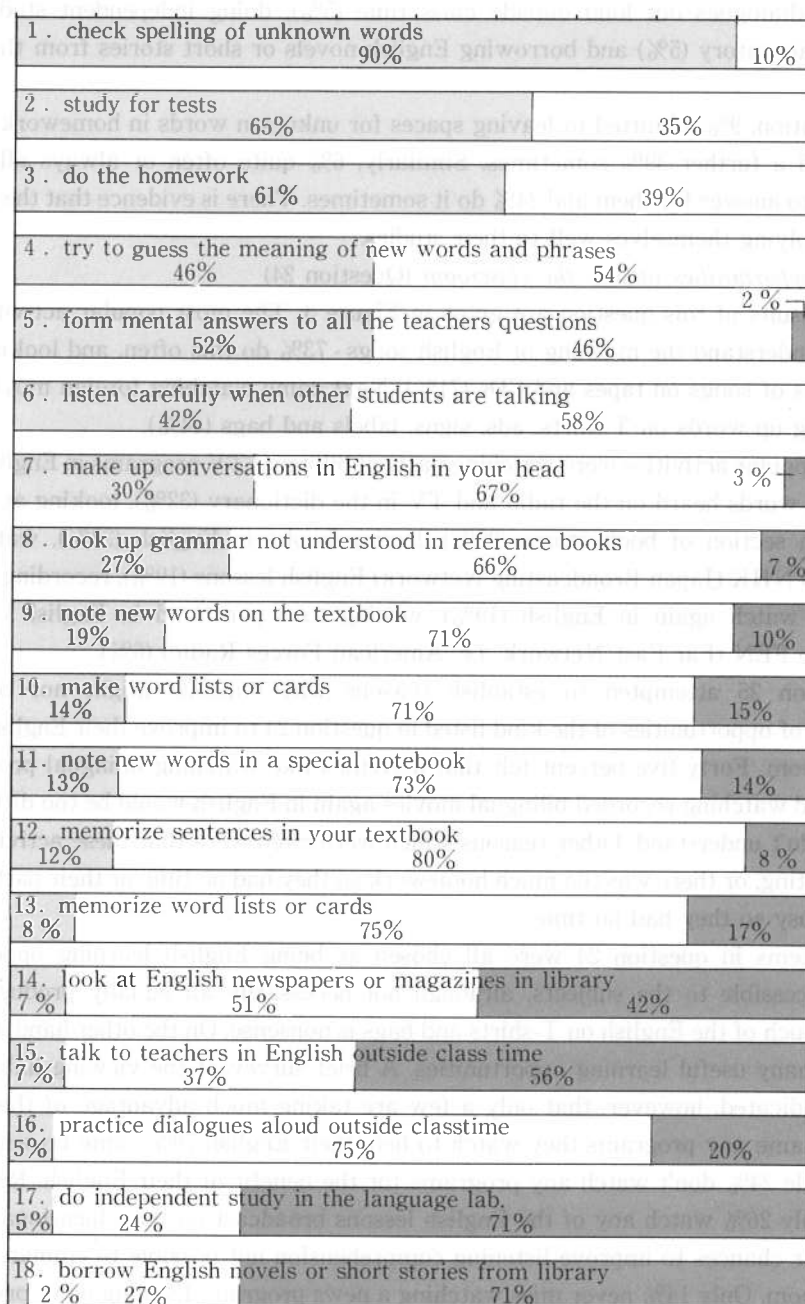
The students were asked about the homework and independent study they do for their basic English conversation class. (Most students also attend another optional English conversation class although a handful do not.) The class in question meets 30 times each academic year and lasts 90 minutes. Homework is given almost every week although not always for collection. Forty-nine percent of the subjects admitted to spending less than an hour on it, a further 46% between 1 and 2 hours, while 5% spent between 2 and 3 hours on it. One *well-used* hour would usually be more than adequate to complete the tasks set.

Satisfying the requirement to hand in homework seems to be a priority for many since 24% of subjects do no independent study, such as making word lists and preparing lessons, and 53% do less than 1 hour per week. On the other hand, only 10% thought a total of less than an hour on both homework and independent study was what they *should* be doing. The majority (58%) thought somewhere between 2 and 5 hours was what they should be doing while the remaining 32% thought between 1 and 2 hours was enough.

Study techniques used at college (Question 23)

The results of this question are shown in Figure 2. The most often cited techniques were checking the spelling of unknown words in homework - 90% do this often or always, studying for tests (65%) and doing the homework (61%). These were followed by trying to guess at the meaning of new words and phrases (46%), forming mental answers to all the teacher's questions (46%), listening carefully when other students are talking (42%) and making up conversations in English in one's head (30%).

The remaining techniques were relatively little used: using grammar books to look up grammar not understood (27%), noting new words in the textbook (19%), making word lists or cards (14%), noting new words in a special notebook (13%), memorizing sentences in the textbook (12%), memorizing word lists or cards (8%), looking at English magazines and newspapers in the library (7%), talking to teachers in English outside class time (7%),



very important
 somewhat important
 not at all important

Figure 2. The Relative Importance of Formal Study Techniques at College (Question 23)

practicing dialogues out loud outside class time (5%), doing independent study in the language laboratory (5%) and borrowing English novels or short stories from the library (2%).

In addition, 9% admitted to leaving spaces for unknown words in homework often or always and a further 39% sometimes. Similarly, 6% quite often or always allow their neighbour to answer for them and 24% do it sometimes. There is evidence that the majority are not applying themselves well to their studies.

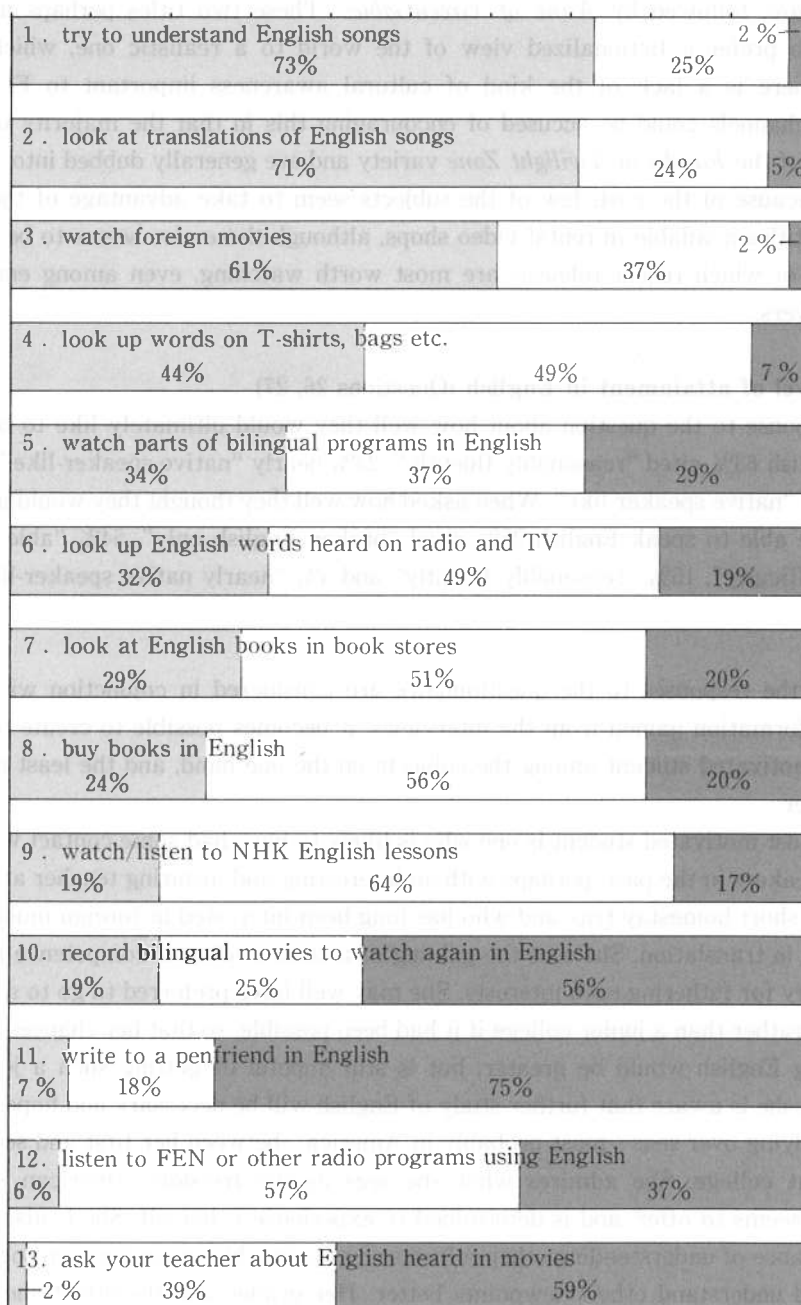
Learning opportunities outside the classroom (Question 24)

The results of this question are given in Figure 3. The most popular activities were trying to understand the meaning of English songs - 73% do this often, and looking at the translations of songs on tapes and CDs (71%). Next came watching foreign movies (61%) and looking up words on T-shirts, ads, signs, labels and bags (44%).

Less popular activities were watching parts of bilingual TV programs in English (34%), looking up words heard on the radio and TV in the dictionary (32%), looking at books in the foreign section of book stores (29%), buying books in English (24%), watching or listening to NHK (Japan Broadcasting Network) English lessons (19%), recording bilingual movies to watch again in English (19%), writing to a penfriend in English (7%), and listening to FEN (Far East Network, i.e. American Forces Radio) (6%).

Question 25 attempted to establish reasons why students might not be taking advantage of opportunities of the kind listed in question 24 to improve their English outside the classroom. Forty-five percent felt that activities like watching bilingual programs in English and watching recorded bilingual movies again in English would be too difficult and they wouldn't understand. Other reasons which were cited were that these activities were not interesting, or there was too much homework so they had no time or their part-time job was too busy so they had no time.

The items in question 24 were all chosen as being English learning opportunities readily accessible to the subjects, although not necessarily all equally productive. For instance much of the English on T-shirts and bags is nonsense. On the other hand, television provides many useful learning opportunities. A brief survey of the viewing habits of the subjects indicated, however, that only a few are taking much advantage of these. When asked to name any programs they watch to help their English 70% came up with *Sesame Street*, while 24% don't watch any programs for the benefit of their English. Regrettably enough, only 26% watch any of the English lessons broadcast on the educational channel, which offer chances to improve listening comprehension not possible to emulate easily in the classroom. Only 14% never miss watching a news program. Evening news programs in Japan are usually an hour long and devote at least part of this time to overseas topics of general interest which would provide excellent cultural background. Only one student admitted to having enjoyed a documentary (about Agatha Christie) recently, although excellent ones are shown frequently, including many made overseas. Data about movie viewing habits was no more encouraging. The most popular movie seen recently was *Back*



very important
 somewhat important
 not at all important

Figure 3. The Relative Importance of Informal Learning Opportunities Outside the Classroom. (Question 24)

to the Future, followed by *Anne of GreenGables*. These two titles perhaps indicate a tendency to prefer a fictionalized view of the world to a realistic one, which further suggests there is a lack of the kind of cultural awareness important to FLL. Local television channels could be accused of encouraging this in that the majority of movies shown are of the *Rambo* or *Twilight Zone* variety and are generally dubbed into Japanese. Perhaps because of the cost, few of the subjects seem to take advantage of the greater variety of titles available in rental video shops, although there also seems to be a lack of awareness of which recent releases are most worth watching, even among enthusiastic movie viewers.

Desired level of attainment in English (Questions 26, 27)

In response to the question about how well they would ultimately like to be able to speak English 63% cited "reasonably fluently", 23% nearly "native speaker-like" and 11% completely "native speaker-like". When asked how well they thought they would ultimately actually be able to speak English 25% cited "broken English only", 54% "able to travel without difficulty", 15% "reasonably fluently" and 5% "nearly native speaker-like".

Profiles

When the responses to the questionnaire are considered in conjunction with the additional information gained from the interviews, it becomes possible to create profiles of the most motivated student among the subjects on the one hand, and the least motivated on the other.

The most motivated student is one who is likely to have had some contact with native English speakers in the past, perhaps with an interesting and inspiring teacher at school or while on a short homestay trip, and who has long been interested in foreign music, movies and novels in translation. She sees the gaining of a certain level of competence in English as necessary for futhering such interests. She may well have preferred to go to a four year university rather than a junior college if it had been possible, so that her chances of finding a job using English would be greater, but is still hopeful of getting such a job. In this connection she is aware that further study of English will be necessary and hopes to spend a year studying over-seas—most probably in America—between her first and second year of study at college. She admires what she sees as the freedom American society in particular seems to offer, and is determined to experience it herself. She is also aware of the importance of understanding other cultures so as to be able to see her own society more clearly and understand other viewpoints better. Her grades and the effort she puts into doing her homework reflect her relative seriousness of purpose and she may not feel entirely satisfied with the progress she is making at junior college.

The least motivated student is one who has come to college somewhat on the insistence of parents who consider graduating from college an essential step if a "suitable" job and husband are to be found, and want to ensure that their child has an opportunity that was

denied them. The student herself may not care to admit to these motivating factors too openly, but is quite prepared to enjoy two years respite between the rigours of highschool and working life. She chose English as a major because it was the subject she always enjoyed most at school, although she may not necessarily have been particularly good at it. She does not, however, expect to use English in the future to any great extent, although certainly she expects to go overseas on a honeymoon trip. She may even doubt whether her parents would let her go on any other kind of trip while she is still under their care and does not see it as feasible after marriage. To a certain extent she regards college as a 'finishing school' and English as a kind of hobby and watches foreign movies and other programs for entertainment only. She admits to not being sure whether the image she has of American society is very accurate but does sense that American society is freer than that which she knows in Japan. She admires this but may doubt her ability to adapt to the forthrightness she sees as being characteristic of Americans in particular. Like her classmate above, however, she is aware of the need to understand other cultures better and admits Japanese are generally not well informed about other cultures. Homework gets no more attention than is necessary to satisfy the teacher's minimum requirements. She is confident that she will, in any case be able to graduate and find a job.

3 . Conclusion

It is apparent that the subjects are, in general, not strongly motivated by instrumental needs in that chances of them finding jobs using English with no other qualifications than a college graduation certificate are slim and the students themselves are generally aware of this. Nor can they be said to be motivated integratively in that they are also aware that chances for extended contact with native English speakers is limited. The holiday tours most of the subjects expect to make at sometime are not likely to provide much in the way of real contacts. The Japanese employment system does not encourage long holidays, while extended leave without pay is unheard of.

The factors which have encouraged this particular group of students to come to junior college and study English would seem to originate primarily in Japanese society's attitude to tertiary education for young women as something with a certain form, namely the obtaining of a college graduation certificate, but little real content in terms of qualifying skills. When students' reasons for choosing English as a major were examined, the factors which emerged most clearly were the desire to be able understand foreign songs and movies, as well as to understand another culture and to become a better educated person. Thus, personal and social reasons for learning English yield possible teaching strategies based on the use of movies which could satisfy both students' and society's desires.

Anthony Burgess, in a short article on the dubbing of movies into foreign languages, says that, "in Scandinavia subtitling is the rule, and it is adduced as one explanation of the admirable English, usually with an American accent, spoken by young Danes, Norwegians and Swedes" (p. 298). In spite of the interest the subjects of this study showed in foreign

movies, the influence these movies have had on their English ability, and by association, understanding of foreign cultures does not seem to be as great as it could be. There are some obvious reasons for this; the Japanese school system does not emphasize aural and oral skills in the teaching of English so that even for students willing to make the attempt, watching an English language movie unaided would be a formidable task unless subtitles or dubbing are relied on. Yet for most of the subjects the watching of English language movies, as well as constituting an important reason for wanting to learn English, also affords the most readily available source of exposure to the target language. Spolsky (1989) states that, "whatever the language learner brings to the task, whether innate ability, a language acquisition device, attitudes, previous knowledge, and experience of language and language learning, the outcome of language learning depends to a large measure on the amount and kind of exposure to the target language" (p. 166). While movie viewing does not offer a chance for oral practice it can help fulfill one of Spolsky's conditions for second language learning, namely "an opportunity to learn how its elements are embedded in linguistic and nonlinguistic contexts" (p. 168) - a chance otherwise unavailable to most learners in this learning environment.

These students' interest in foreign movies, combined with a lack of any strong motivation to gain real fluency in spoken English, reflected in the fact that 25% of the students surveyed expect ultimately only to be able to speak broken English, while a further 54% expect to master only enough English to travel without difficulty, are the key points to take into consideration when designing a course for junior college students. Ely (1986) emphasizes the importance of discovering "which reasons for language study predict the greatest motivational strength *in a particular population*" and also the strength of that motivation (p. 28). In support of this, Ely quotes Gardner and Lambert (1972) when he distinguishes between "the goal toward which concerted activity is directed and the effort or persistence demonstrated in the process of striving for the goal" (p. 15). These comments highlight what is perhaps the most significant result of the present survey; the subjects showed a great interest in reaching a level of English ability which would enable them to understand foreign movies, but, judging from the amount of effort expended, little interest in formal classroom studies, which they perhaps do not perceive as helpful in achieving a primary objective. A good compromise would seem to lie in the possibility of using material from movies as teaching materials instead of, or in conjunction with, a traditional textbook. College students have already studied six years of English, so, in theory, it is not necessary to present grammar formally, nor is this the objective of a so-called 'English conversation class', and whilst there are many textbooks available which present functional and situational English very well, there is the feeling that much of it will be forgotten before it is ever used. An alternative would be to examine selections from movies for their "linguistic and non-linguistic contexts", and perhaps adapt them if appropriate into dialogues for performance in class. A carefully chosen *series* of movies could also illustrate significant cultural aspects. One example might be the use of the movies *Out of Africa* and

Passage to India to introduce the topic of colonialism. Similarly, *Witness*, *Madame Sousatzka* and *Sophie's Choice* could be used to introduce a study of immigration and its significance, past and present, for English speaking countries. If time did not allow movies to be watched during class, independent study guides could be made up for completion by each student by the end of the academic year. (At the college the subjects attend there are facilities for viewing movies in the library so the necessary movies could be held there for viewing at times convenient to the students.) By using movies in this way, a course could be planned which would take advantage of the interest the students have in watching foreign movies. This would in turn contribute some greater purpose to the choice of English as a major and provide background knowledge and interpretive skills which would be useful in the long term, and change foreign movie viewing from mere entertainment into a source of access to English language input as well as information about English speaking cultures. The knowledge of what it is possible to achieve in this way would greatly enhance student motivation and, it is to be hoped, application. This would be a viable alternative to trying to instil new motivation in the students, something which the social environment and attitudes which form the background to these women college students' study of English probably precludes.

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